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Director of Central Intelligence

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National Intelligence Daily

Monday
27 June 1988

[redacted]

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
DATE: APR 2004

~~Top Secret~~

CPAS NID [redacted]
27 June 1988

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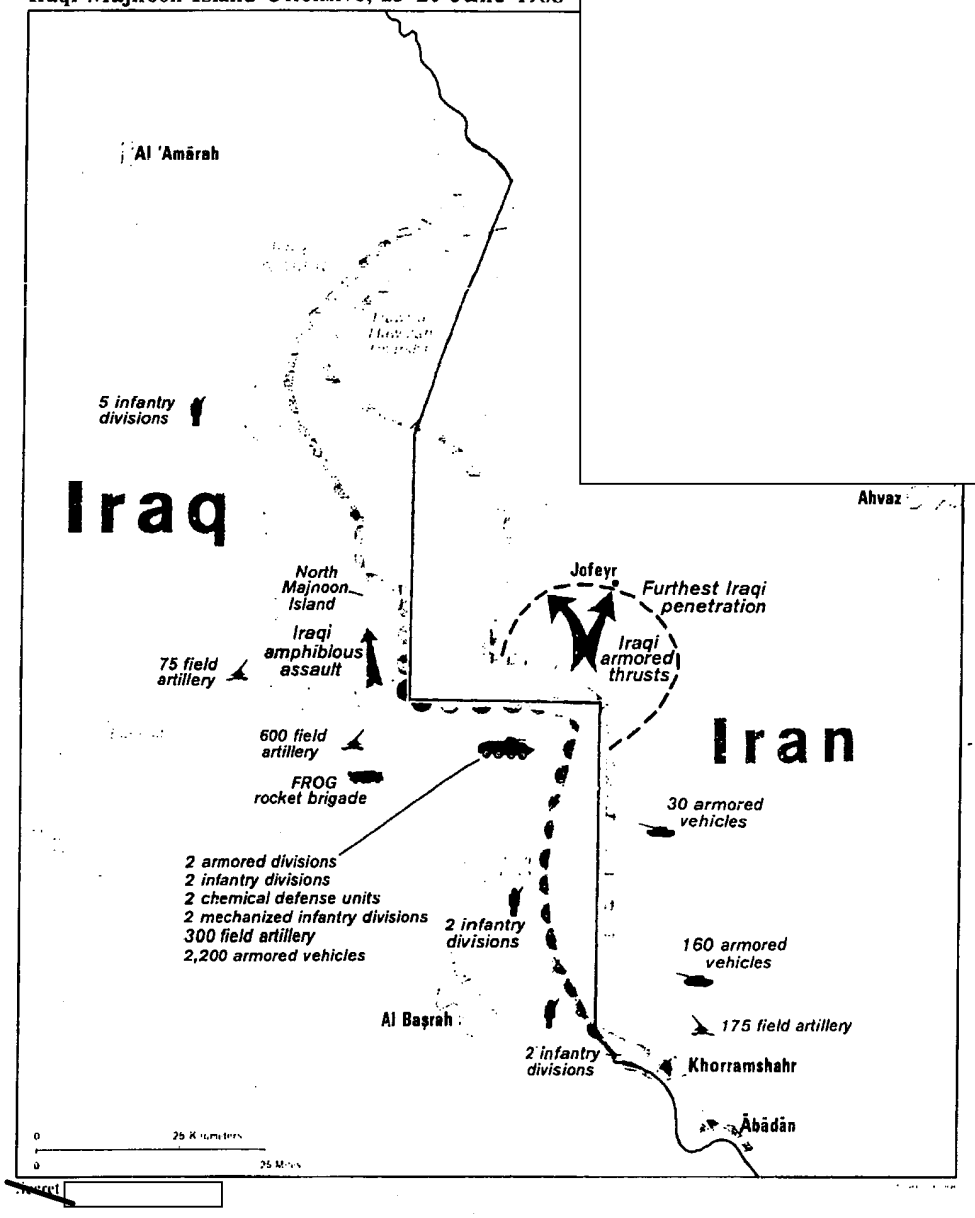

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IRAN-IRAQ: **Iraq Recaptures Majnoon Islands**

Baghdad recaptured the Majnoon Islands with a two-pronged offensive Saturday; yesterday those Iraqi forces that penetrated into Iran had apparently begun withdrawing toward the international border.

Iraqi infantry, supported by combat engineers, on Saturday morning made an amphibious assault from the south onto North Majnoon Island, At the same time, major elements of two Iraqi armored divisions drove into Iranian territory east of Hawr al Hawizah. This penetration sealed off Iranian forces on North Majnoon Island and prevented Iranian reinforcement from the east.

Both avenues of attack were heavily supported by aerial and artillery bombardment. By midday, Baghdad claimed its forces were in control of the Majnoon Islands, and Tehran announced its forces had withdrawn to new positions in the face of extensive Iraqi chemical attacks There is no evidence yet of any chemical weapons use, although Iraqi chemical defense units were deployed just behind the frontlines in the step area.

Iraqi infantry forces occupied additional areas in Hawr al Hawizah yesterday, and the armored units inside Iran were withdrawn from Iranian territory, according to Iraqi press reports. Iraqi armor units heading toward the international border.

Comment: This major Iraqi victory, Iran's fourth defeat in three months, highlights Tehran's lost initiative in the war and increases its problems in dealing with serious military shortcomings. Baghdad's apparent decision not to occupy a sizable portion of Iranian territory will make it more difficult for Tehran to motivate its population for a counterstrike.

Baghdad is in a good position to hold the territory it has recaptured. It can easily shift its forces and attempt to retake Iranian-held Iraqi territory elsewhere along the border.

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